

Page 1, amend the first paragraph, as follows:

B1  
This application is a continuation of International Patent Application No. PCT/EP99/08065, filed October 26, 1999, in the European Patent Office; additionally, Applicants claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) based on prior-filed, copending provisional application No. 60/106,627, filed November 2, 1998, in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office; the contents of both of which are relied upon and incorporated herein by reference.

Page 7, amend the section heading at line 8, as follows:

B2  
DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE EXEMPLARY EMBODIMENTS

Page 8, amend the paragraph at lines 20-31, as follows:

B3  
Figure 2 illustrates a partial construction of a tire T according to a second example in the prior art. As shown, tread band TB includes an underlayer UL at its lowermost portion above rubber sheet RS. Underlayer UL is usually between about 1 mm to 2 mm thick, but in any event, underlayer UL is not thick enough that it comes into contact with the road when the tire tread wears out. This is desirable because the composition of underlayer UL differs from that of tread band TB and, therefore, does not have the same operational characteristics as tread band TB. As

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B3  
in the first prior art example, nylon layer NL is disposed below rubber sheet RS. Underlayer UL, rubber sheet RS, and nylon layer NL have a combined thickness TH. As in the first example, mini-side walls MSW may be disposed at either lateral edge of tread band TB.

Page 14, amend the paragraph at lines 14-20, as follows:

B4  
For the present invention, a combination of NR and E-SBR is preferred. While the best results found were obtained with NR, unfortunately the use of an all-NR mixture was ruled out because of the troubles encountered when the compound was extruded. The temperature needed to extrude the NR product was simply too high. Experiments showed that a suitable compromise was obtained with a blend of about 60% NR and about 40% E-SBR. The compound material may comprise greater than about 50% natural rubber.

**Amendments to the Claims**

Please cancel, without prejudice or disclaimer, claims ~~1-13~~ and ~~17-24~~; amend claims 14-16; and add new claims 25-92, as follows:

B5  
14. (twice amended) A pneumatic tire for a vehicle wheel, comprising:  
  
a carcass;  
  
a tread band;  
  
sidewalls;  
  
beads for anchoring the tire on a rim of the wheel; and

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